

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. Claims 14-21 are new. No new matter is being added.

The Examiner is asked to change the Attorney Docket number to 20115-06977.

Applicants have inserted a Cross-Reference to Related Applications.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 4-7 and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Grasso et al in view of Angotti et al. Although the Examiner cited 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as the basis for the rejection, the rejection appears to be based on obviousness and Applicants are therefore responding as though the rejections were made under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim 1 is illustrative and recites:

A computer-implemented method for processing electronic messages, said method comprising:
receiving a message in an enterprise mail system, said message from a human message sender;
categorizing said message by selecting a first category entry from a category database comprising a plurality of category entries, each said category entry containing information for handling particular incoming messages; and
creating a response message using said information from said first category entry, said response message including a response body defined in said first category entry and a set of message recipients defined in said first category entry.

The claimed invention enables e-mails received at an enterprise system to be assigned to one of a group of categories. Each category has associated parameter information for how a message of that category type should be handled. Once an e-mail is assigned to a category, a response is created using the parameters for that category, including a response body appropriate for the category to which the e-mail has been assigned. The recipients of the message are also determined by the parameters for that category. One advantage of the claimed invention is that different recipients for the

created response can be stored in the category parameters, and automatically selected based on the chosen category, thus saving the need for the responder, e.g., a customer service representative, to have to enter the information manually.

Grasso describes an Intranet-based system for distributing information using a methodology called "Adaptive Distribution." However, Grasso does not teach the claimed invention. In Grasso, the Adaptive Distribution methodology is used to track members of distribution groups so that as new people join and leave various organizations, they are appropriately added to or removed from associated distribution lists. (Col. 10, lines 48-67.) Grasso does not disclose the claimed step of "categorizing said message by selecting a first category entry from a category database comprising a plurality of category entries, each said category entry containing information for handling particular incoming messages." The portion of Grasso at col. 8, lines 20-26 relied upon by the Examiner in the Response to Arguments section of the most recent Office Action is not on point. There, Grasso discusses the difficulty of locating archived documents by searching within a particular category. (Col. 8, lines 7-32.)

Nor does Grasso disclose the step of "creating a response message using said information from said first category entry, said response message including a response body defined in said first category entry and a set of message recipients defined in said first category entry." Grasso in fact does not discuss the notion of responding to a categorized e-mail at all, let alone including a response body and a set of category-specific message recipients in such a response.

Accordingly, Grasso does not teach, suggest or disclose the features of claim 1, and claim 1 is therefore patentable over Grasso.

The defects of Grasso are not cured by the addition of Angotti. Angotti is directed to automatically interpreting a received e-mail and determining whether it can be responded to automatically. However, Angotti does not disclose the steps of the claimed invention. For example, Angotti does not disclose "creating a response message

using said information from said first category entry, said response message including a response body defined in said first category entry and a set of message recipients defined in said first category entry.” As the Examiner herself noted, Angotti describes automatically preparing an electronic message “from a repository for automatic delivery to the source.” (Examiner’s Response to Arguments, Oct. 25, 2002. Emphasis in original.) Nothing in Angotti suggests or describes using message categories to define a set of message recipients to receive the response. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over Angotti.

The combination of Grasso with Angotti also does not teach, suggest or disclose the invention of claim 1. Even if a motivation to combine the references had been present, which it was not, the combination of the references would at best yield a message distribution system that could automatically reply to the sender of a distributed message. This combination would still fail to include, for example, the claimed step of “creating a response message using said information from said first category entry, said response message including a response body defined in said first category entry and a set of message recipients defined in said first category entry.” Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Grasso and Angotti.

Similarly, neither Grasso nor Angotti teach the features of claim 4 alone or in combination with each other. For example, as discussed above, neither reference discloses “providing a template response message to said first enterprise mail system user using information in said category entry, said template response message including a set of message recipients defined in said category entry.” Claim 4 is therefore patentable over the cited references. Likewise, newly added independent claims 14, 17, 20 and 21 are patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as claims 1 and 4.

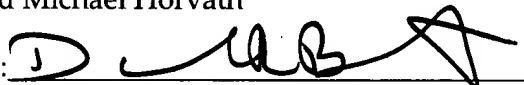
Dependent claims 2 and 3 depend from independent claim 1, and therefore derive patentability from the patentability of claim 1, in addition to reciting their own

patentable features. Dependent claims 5-13, which depend from independent claim 4, and dependent claims 15-16 and 18-19, which depend from independent claims 14 and 17, respectively, also derive their patentability from the patentability of the independent claims from which they depend, in addition to reciting their own patentable features. Accordingly, each of claims 1-21 is patentable over the cited references.

Favorable action and allowance of all claims now pending, claims 1-13, are solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the Attorney for Applicants at the telephone number below if any matters remain outstanding prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
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